

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (*currently amended*) A method of setting up a call between a subscriber premises and a call center, comprising:
 - receiving a call set up request from a gateway responsive to the subscriber premises, said gateway being connected to the subscriber via a data network;
 - sending a availability query from the gateway to the call center via the data network;
 - preparing a call set up instruction for setting up the call ~~between the subscriber premises and initiated by~~ the call center to the subscriber premises if an availability reply is received from the call center; and
 - estimating a time-in-queue for the call center to become available to ~~receive~~ initiate the call and preparing a call queue status message for delivery to the gateway if an unavailability reply is received before the availability reply is received from the call center.
2. (*currently amended*) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing a call path between the ~~subscriber premises and the call center and the subscriber premises~~.
3. (*original*) The method of claim 2, wherein a network switch provides the call path in response to the call set up instruction.
4. (*original*) The method of claim 2, wherein providing a call path includes placing a call to the subscriber premises.
5. - 6. *cancelled*
7. (*previously amended*) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending the call queue status message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.
8. (*previously amended*) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - receiving an agent available reply from the call center; and

preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway.

9. (previously amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway after receiving the availability reply.

10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the subscriber premises includes a computer for communicating with the gateway, and a telephone for communicating with the call center.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising preparing a call connection message relating to the call being set up between the ~~subscriber premises and the call center and the subscriber premises~~.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, further comprising sending the call connection message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.

13. (currently amended) An apparatus for setting up a call between a subscriber premises and a call center, comprising:

means for receiving a call set up request from a gateway responsive to the subscriber premises, said gateway being connected to the subscriber premises via a data network;

means for sending a query from the gateway to the call center, said gateway being connected to the call center via the data network;

means for receiving a reply at the gateway from the call center;

means for preparing a call set up instruction for setting up the call between the subscriber premises and initiated by the call center to the subscriber premises if an availability reply is received from the call center; and

means for estimating a time-in-queue for the call center to become available to receive initiate the call and means for preparing a call queue status message for delivery

to the gateway if an unavailability reply is received before the availability reply is received from the call center.

14. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising a network switch for providing a call path between the ~~subscriber premises and the call center and the subscriber premises~~ in response to the call set up instruction.

15. (original) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the network switch places a call to the subscriber premises.

16. - 17. cancelled

18. (previously amended) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for sending the call queue status message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.

19. (previously amended) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising: means for receiving an agent available reply from the call center, and means for preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway.

20. (previously amended) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for preparing an updated call queue status message for delivery to the gateway after receiving the availability reply.

21. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the subscriber premises includes a computer for communicating with the gateway, and a telephone for communicating with the call center station.

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22. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising means for preparing a call connection message relating to the call being set up between the subscriber premises and the call center and the subscriber premises.

23. (original) The apparatus of claim 22, further comprising means for delivering the call connection message to the gateway for delivery to the subscriber premises.

24. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the data network is the Internet.

25. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
utilizing a telephone at the subscriber premises for enabling communication between a user at the subscriber premises and an available agent at the call center.

26. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the data network is the Internet.

27. (original) The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:
a telephone at the subscriber premises for enabling communication between a user at the subscriber premises and an available agent at the call center.